

LEAGUE IN TREATY SURE, SAYS TAFT

Myopic Statesmen, Here or Abroad, Cannot Thwart Will of Masses

ARGUES ITS NECESSITY

Needed in Peace Document to Enforce Terms—Postponement Threatens Loss

By WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

Opponents of the league are beginning to see how different the league of nations and its exact meaning will be when the treaty of peace embodying the league of nations shall be submitted to the Senate for its ratification. Hence the emphasis put upon expressions of opinion from Paris that the league will not be included in the treaty.

What the Senator who joined in the round robin means is that there should be a conference and signed by all the nations now in conference and by the defeated nations, a formal treaty permanently fixing the full terms of peace and that that treaty be brought here and submitted to the Senate for ratification.

Then the round robin proposes that the conference after due adjournment, shall have a new session to consider the question of a league of world nations, into which all the other nations shall come and agree if they can.

League Essential to Enforce Treaty. This plan is objectionable, first, because it is a plan to delay the league of nations until after the peace is made. It is objectionable, secondly, because it is entirely certain that an academic conference, such as the second would be if peace were possible without a league, would result in no agreement at all.

The league is made possible only because of its present indispensable character, which defies tradition and precedent.

No one of the objectors to the league anywhere has suggested, as a substitute for a league, any machinery which would enforce the peace. That part of the problem never seems to address itself to them. The fact that we fought this war to achieve peace that should abide has been lost sight of.

Now what do most of these reports from Paris mean, when properly interpreted? Evidently they mean that because a committee has unanimously reported a league of nations, the work of ratifying that in conference may be postponed until the questions that now press as to the terms of the peace to which Germany and her allies are to be subjected shall be considered and settled.

Probably the difficulties these peace terms originally presented led to the adoption by the plenary council of the resolution making the league of nations the first subject for consideration. To postpone the revision of the league of nations now until the peace pact with Germany can be formulated is not to provide for two treaties. It is only adopting a convenient sequence in the subject matter for consideration by the conference in making up the parts of one treaty.

A preliminary pact may be made with Germany, signed by the representatives of the Allies, including the President and by German representatives, fixing in advance the terms of the peace subsequently to be embodied in the treaty, but that will not be brought here. Two countries that will not be brought here, it is not necessary that it should be. It will be merely on the part of the President the exercise of his power as the commander-in-chief in a state of war to make a protocol of peace as was made in the Spanish War.

Comments on Pichon's Statements. It may be admitted, however, that this is not an explanation of statements that have emanated from M. Tardieu and M. Pichon. They have expressed doubt as to whether the league of nations can be included in the treaty of peace. France has been for a league for two reasons—one for the broad purpose of making war improbable, the other for the purely military reason of furnishing an immediate and constant defense against another attack by Germany.

M. Clemenceau favored a new entente, a balance of power in which such a defense might be secured. He was not originally for a league of nations, he was led to support it by the demand of the people—the plain people of France. The report of the league constitution is not satisfactory to these French statesmen who look to the league only as a means of immediate defense. A permanent league army—an international police force—was not provided in it, as they urged.

Hence the waning interest of some of them in the league, but the force behind the league is in France the people and it is to be found in the National Assembly. No Premier is likely to stand against it.

The same thing is true in Great Britain. It is the great body of the people who demand it there. Mr. Lloyd George recognized that when he declared for it in his last campaign.

The league, if it wins, is to win in all the European countries as well as in this, because the people, seeing more clearly than even statesmen and politicians, know that now is the hour for it.

In view of the unanimous resolution of the plenary council and the attitude of the French, British and Italian peoples, we can be reasonably sure that Mr. Wilson does not reckon without his host when he says that the peace treaty will contain the league covenant.

Of course, European statesmen who do not favor a league will not get their way by the round robin of our Senators and will use that to weaken the position of the President in the conference. As the discussions go on, however, the round robin is apt to lose its force in the conference and in the presence of the only man who can sign a treaty for the United States and can say for that

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In detail, Senator Reed analyzed the league charter, copies of which had been distributed to all members of the joint legislative session. He said the tentative constitution was of British origin, and asserted that America would be entangled directly in European alliances.

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